

## **NESAWG 2015 *It Takes A Region* Conference**

**Session:** Diet, Geography, Access, & Public Health Discussion & Work Group

### ***Presenters:***

Amanda Buczynski (JHU Center for a Livable Future)

Joanne Burke (UNH Sustainability Institute, Food Solutions NE)

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### Session 1

#### ***Icebreaker:***

How does racial equity and food justice impact your work?

What are the top two strategies you feel will make a difference in promoting greater racial equity and food justice?

#### ***Responses:***

What does diversity mean?

What is the reality of racial diversity in your area

Being able to build allies within class and race

Identifying who is being marginalized

#### ***Powerpoint presentation:***

- Define food justice: the rights of people and communities to grow, sell, buy and eat healthy food regardless of race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, ability, or affordability (IATP).
- Want to focus on data sources and working together.
- Equality vs. Equity: More needs to be done for other groups who are starting out at a much more disadvantaged level.
- Increase in food insecurity and very low food insecurity since 2007 (graph).
- U.S. average for being food insecure is around 14%, or 1 out of 7.
- Individuals in food insecure households (low and very low): 32.8 million adults, 15.3 million children (48.1 million total people).
- Illustrating health disparities among races, including breast cancer, diabetes.
- Self sufficiency standard looks at the amount of income necessary to meet basic needs (including taxes) without public subsidies and without private/informal assistance.

#### ***Open discussion:***

- A big barrier to access to healthy food is *transportation*.
- Highlighting the importance of city level data.
- Three big issues with food access are cost, transportation and cooking skills
- Access to kitchen equipment like stoves and refrigerators (some people live in hotel rooms)
- Self sufficiency standards can act as an outreach and educational tool, and as a policy driver.
- Using health statistics to illustrate other things like living wages and general standard of living.
- Utilizing data to make persuasive points and to help get funding, but not to implement programs necessarily.
- Correlation can be very powerful and sometimes proving causality isn't as powerful.
- Should we be accepting the federal poverty level? Should we look at different markers?
- HHS just put out in September the Supplemental Poverty Measure Index (not to replace poverty line, but it does get at other costs and issues).
- Context is important
- It would be helpful to see the data as a percentage of the official poverty line
- Poverty cliff
- Study that demonstrates the positive associations with SNAP program and mental health
- Look at data on mental health and food
- Access to what?
- Curb-side markets in Rochester: bringing food to people's homes and taking cash, debit, credit and EBT
- Policies that we could advocate for could improve the situation for disadvantaged people: getting behind them will address the intersectionality of the issue.
- Use data to adapt and organize and inform a movement
- Where does the intervention come from? It can come from the innovative use of data.
- Importance of community-based data collection, local hospitals can play a roll
- Collaboration with hospitals for food as medicine (prescriptions)
- Testimonies and stories are important for funding and small-scale programs

***Day 2 plan— where do we go from here***

Review measures of poverty, income, and living wages (closely examine self sufficiency standard)

Identify gaps and opportunities for better data collection and utilization

Explore strategies for advocacy and collective action

## Session 2

- Recap of racial equity conversation during breakfast
- How to incorporate people of color into our institution
- Is it beholden of us to be talking about the class structure in our society? What is the best way to talk about the structural nature of these problems? And their intentions?
- We can begin to use the tools we've discussed to create spaces and build the strength to get the conversation started.
- Living wage!
- Building partnerships among organizations so that organizations can still work within their mission but address larger, more pervasive issues.
- Introductions
- Women run the country
- When people have higher income (for fewer hours of work) they are more able to engage in the civic process and democracy.
- Look at resources around you (e.g. churches) and they will share their needs with you. Curbside Market helps with access to food.
- Financial literacy is crucial to making the living wage work.
- Utilize the living wage calculator as a tool.
- Group leaders want to couple on the ground work with advocacy work.
- Transition to the Self-Sufficiency Calculator explanation
- Consider possible partners to help establish Self-Sufficiency Standards (SSS) in other states and regions (Center for Women's Welfare).
- It's essentially a living wage standard. They break it down by the size of the family.

- SSS is a way to be more explicit about the costs that people are experiencing. The poverty line illustrates extreme poverty but doesn't get at those who are barely making it.
- What is the SSS used for? Can be used for grant-funding and creating an image for funders so they can better understand the lived experiences of the working poor.
- There is an opportunity to utilize the SSS in the Head-Start program in the U.S. The SSS can be implemented at intake.
- MIT living wage calculator is available for every state and county (and it is sometimes desegregated by metropolitan area).
- The leaders might be able to work on the self-sufficiency standards and living wage calculator as a percentage of the poverty line.
- Using self-sufficiency standard calculator
- Preventative care as an opportunity to create change and move the needle (progress the movement)
- We need to focus on stories and elevating voices.
- Treating people with dignity is how we get people to come together and make change.
- What about a maximum wage, vs. a minimum wage?
- Community data collection can be tools for making larger change in the community.
- Can join DGAP group and get access to resources from last year's information and this year's too. Members can also add resources to the group's list.
- Potential for establishing a listserv.
- They will add the slides online so that group can access them.
- Is there draft language that NESAWG has prepared around issues like living wage? Is there a letter already written that we can send to a congressperson?
- **Actionable issues from the past two days:**
  - Look more about how sufficiency can relate to Head-Start;
    - Contribute to disseminating living wage information;
      - Establish skills around race and equity conversations

## DGAP DATA SOURCES:

- [Maryland Hunger Solutions](#)
- [Food Environment Atlas, USDA](#)
- [Center for Women's Welfare](#)
- [Living wage calculator from MIT](#)
- [Supplemental Poverty Measure](#)
- [Center for a Livable Future, Baltimore MD](#)
- FGE Food and Nutrition Team
- [\*Waking Up White\*](#), Debbie Irving
- [\*The New Jim Crow\*](#), Michelle Alexander
- [\*Between the World and Me\*](#), Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Kimberly Travers, researcher
- [National Good Food Network \(Webinar on leveraging healthcare funding to build healthier communities\)](#)
- [\*Overlooked and Undercounted: How the Great Recession Impacted Household Self-Sufficiency in Pennsylvania\*](#) — Report from Pathways PA (see p. 15 for a breakdown by race)